ILLEGAL BY DESIGN:

DEHUMANISATION OF IMMIGRANT POPULATIONS IN THE MEDIA

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(Reuters, 2024)

Glossary

Propaganda Analysis- Pieces from Nazi Germany and Trump's ICE propaganda

In Modern Cinema- Summary of dehumanisation of Asian populations, analysis of "Madama Butterfly" and "Miss Saigon", in American cinema; with an analysis of "Gone With the Wind" and "Scarface"

News Outlets- Dehumanising lexical and visual imagery

Popular Culture- analysis of quotes from "Full Metal Jacket", examples of dehumanising caricatures in memes, societal culture and opinion, and the rise in xenophobia following the September 11th attacks

How These Media Forms Interact

References/ Credits

"Madama Butterfly" (Brini, 1954)

"Der ewige Jude" (Hippler, 1940)

(The White House, 2025)

PROPAGANDA

Common metaphors include comparisons to creatures seen as "carriers of plague" that must be exterminated, and to animals such as "leeches", or "bloodsuckers" to depict the target group as feeding off the work of the in-group. Victims are often portrayed as a threat to the in-group nation's survival, purity, or civilisation.

Whether being depicted through demonic metaphors, or as "moral decay"- destroying the nation's values or economy. Fabricated biological theories may be claimed, painting the target group as a biological or racial threat. These theories "gain credibility" using medical terminology to portray the dehumanisation with a scientific justification.

The main strategy employed in dehumanising propaganda is the aim to create a harsh "us vs them" divide between the groups. The target group is shown as a uniformed population; joined in the "evil" to destroy the in-group. Propaganda guides the in-group into also uniforming, to support their victimised group and fight for their nation.

These methods are used in unity to disengage the public's moral concern for the targeted group. By describing the out-group as lacking humanity/ human life, or the capacity for human suffering, the inhumane acts carried out are accepted or viewed as necessary by the public.

Propaganda has been used for centuries as a method of wide spreading a dehumanising narrative of a population. It is often used as a key technique for inciting a genocide and willing the public to support or accept the actions taken.

Propaganda identifies an out-group and an in-group and often uses dehumanising language and imagery to portray the out-group. By designating one as the out-group, it coaxes the in-group to sideline their complaints and needs and build up their own moral and support.

The out-group can endure denied basic dignity, compassion, empathy, and senseless violence without opposition from the in-group society.

This narrative allows governments to justify their mass military action as "necessary", or "preventative".Propaganda like this is often produced in hand with excluding or marginalising policies and laws.

There are several recurring themes and techniques used to strip individuals of their humanity and justify violence against them. Animalistic metaphors are often used, likening the target group to creatures that evoke disgust or fear. This is used to invoke hate and distrust in the target group, and to divide the in and out groups.

ANALYSIS OF PROPAGANDA IN NAZI GERMANY

"Behind the enemy powers: the Jews" Circa 1942, US Holocaust Memorial Museum

Portrays a stereotype of Jewish people; as being behind the scenes to control the Allied powers. The British, American, and Soviet flags representing the Allied powers. The star of David identifies this man as a Jewish man; the star being a physical demarcation Jewish people were required to wear during the Holocaust. He is shown with an angry physical expression, further imbedding the trope of Jewish people being "evil". This kind of propaganda was used to encourage the passivity and acceptance from the public of the measures taken against the Jewish. The measures were depicted as the Nazi government "stepping in" and "restoring order".

"Der ewige Jude" (The Eternal Jew), by Fritz Hippler, 1940

Advertising poster for the film "Der ewige Jude" (The Eternal Jew), directed by Fritz Hippler, Germany, 1940. The poster; designed by the Reich Ministry of Propaganda, depicts an eastern European Jewish man with exaggerated, harsh facial features, and intense, "cunning" eyes. He is shown with classic antisemitic characteristics such as the disproportionately large, hooked nose, heavy brow, and unkempt facial hair. His depiction further enforces the stereotype of Jewish as cunning, untrustworthy outsiders; through the man's malicious smirk and predatory eyes. The poster features swarms of rats (in the background and layered on the man's coat), this was a deliberate psychological tactic to dehumanize the Jewish by comparing them to disease-carrying vermin. The figure's face partially emerged from the shadows portrays him as a "puppet master" orchestrating world events (enforcing the same stereotype as "Behind the enemy powers: the Jews".

Films such as this played an impactful role in the incorporation of racial antisemitism. They portrayed Jewish people as "subhuman" creatures, that infiltrated Aryan society. "Der ewige Jude" depicted Jews as wandering cultural parasites; that were consumed by sex and money. The film was presented as a documentary on initialrelease. Hitler and Goebbels believed at this time that film was essential for moulding the public's perception. The Nazis established a film department in 1930 to further promote the Nazi philosophy and agenda.

"Hitlerjunge mit Fahne vor Nurnberger Burg" by Ludwig Hohlwein, 1936

This artwork was created in 1936 by German artist Ludwig Hohlwein, for the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP). This poster was designed to promote Aryan supremacy and German national pride. It depicts a boy wearing a uniform for the "Hitler Youth", giving the Nazi salute and holding a Nazi flag; he is shown embodying the regime's demands for obedience, physical fitness, and sacrifice. The "Nurnberger Burg" (Nuremberg castle) shown as the backdrop, links the Third Reich to the glory, power, and perceived purity of the Holy Roman Empire. This imagery illustrates the Nazi regime's efforts to indoctrinate the German youth and further promote the ideology of the Third Reich. It was targeted for younger audiences, to influence them to join for the pride of their country and become future warriors for the Nazi cause.

"Der ist schuld am Kriege!" (He is to blame for the war!) by Hans Sweitzer, 1943

This poster shows a Jewish man (identified by the Jewish star badge with the word "Jude", meaning Jew). Antisemitic stereotypes of Jewish appearance are reinforced with the man's large nose, and formal clothing (suit and top hat) to represent his wealth. He is shown cowering from a hand pointed accusingly at him; with an angry expression. Text is shown above and below the figure stating "Der ist schuld am Kriege" ("He is to blame for the war!" or "He is at fault for the war!"). This piece illustrates a Nazi propaganda technique of linking Jewish people to Germany's military enemies and claiming they started the war. This imagery portrays Germany as the victim, defending itself from the "Jewish enemy" operating behind the scenes.

"Germany's victory, Europe's freedom" Unknown artist, 1942

This poster displays a German solider defeating a red dragon with lightning bolts in a V shape. The red dragon is representative of bolshevism, or communism. The V shape for the lightning bolts represents a "v" for victory. The German propagandists used this symbol for themselves- the Allied "V for victory" sign- to diminish the power of the Allied statement.

This piece was representative of the events of Germany's surprise attack on the Soviet Union on the 22nd June1941. The Nazi's justified their attack by calling it a "preventative action" and claiming that their invasion thwarted the Communist plans to conquer Europe and destroy the western civilization. Nazi propagandists produced this piece to influence the public opinion of this attack, and to continue the narrative of a necessary "preventative" attack. Clear dehumanisation is shown with the use of a red dragon to represent the Nazi's enemies.

Modified version of "Uncle Sam at the Crossroads" by the Works Progress Administration, 1936
Updated by Department of Homeland Security in 2025 for a recruitment campaign

The poster shows a man dressed head to toe in American flag colours and patterns, with striped, red pants, a star-spangled blazer and a top hat. He is shown deciding which path to go down at a crossroads. The 1936 version displayed him at a crossroads deciding between "new deal" and "prosperity", while in the updated version he holds a sign for "law and order" while standing by a signpost with directions for "homeland", "service", "opportunity" pointing one way, and "invasion" and "cultural decline" pointing the other. The text reads "America needs you, join ICE now", with "Join.Ice.Gov" below.

The figure "Uncle Sam" is shown in this image to be older, and more distressed. He has patches in his pants and a worried expression. This is intended to evoke a sense of national struggle for the viewers, and a need for restoration. This piece draws on established propaganda rhetoric, with America painted as the supposed victim, in dire need for military and civilian help.

Public service campaign from the U.S Department of Homeland Security, 2025, campaigned as a social media graphic posted by the DHS and the White House, June 2025

This campaign features "Uncle Sam" again, with him shown hanging up a poster stating, "Help your country... and yourself...", with the text "Report all foreign invaders" following. It is accompanied by the official ICE tip line (866-DHS-2-ICE). The graphic draws on styles from World War 2 propaganda.

It is designed to encourage US citizens to report undocumented immigrants to ICE. By depicting Uncle Sam nailing the notice, it frames mass deportation and citizen reporting as an essential, patriotic duty. The term "foreign invaders" is used to characterise immigration as a threat or invasion, portraying America as the victim once again. This poster has received backlash for being reminiscent of authoritarian or Nazi-era propaganda. However, administration officials have defended it as a "necessary" tool to address illegal immigration and protect American citizens from the supposed "criminal illegal alien invaders".

IN MODER AMERICA; ICE PROPAGANDA

Recruitment campaign by the US Department of Homeland Security for ICE, June 2025

This image displays the character of "Uncle Sam", with this specific pose being based off the illustration"Uncle Sam at the Crossroads" (Flagg,1936). It displays the figure of "Uncle Sam", looking aged and with a stern expression- wearing a star-spangled vest and striped pants. He is shown holding a newspaper titled "Front line flash" that reads "Join ICE now" below. The background features dramatic, dark smoke to evoke a sense of urgency in the message.

This edited version features the text "They have got to go!" at the top, with the "Join. Ice. Gov" URL below.

This image began circulating online around the 11th June, 2025 (originating from an X account associated with white nationalist content), and gained further attention after it was posted on the social media of the Department of Homeland Security and White House officials on the 12th June; as a recruitment campaign for their nationwide recruitment drive. The image was posted with the caption "Every criminal illegal alien must go"; imbedding the exclusion of the message. The use of the character "Uncle Sam" aims to frame the modern immigration enforcement as a historic national obligation; reminiscent of past military efforts. This image also uses World War 2 style aesthetics to further imbed this nostalgia.

"Aliens" by The White House, 28th May 2026

ALIENS
DECLASSIFIED
THEY WALK AMONG US
For 60 years, the U.S. government has kept a closely guarded secret.
Aliens have been walking among us, living in our neighborhoods, and interacting with us in our daily lives.
They've shopped in the same stores, attended the same classes as our children, and lived seemingly normal human existences.
With one exception – they do not belong here.

The website features a live "alien arrest map", showing ICE immigration arrests across the US. It also statesthat "if you've witnessed an Alien abduction, do not be alarmed. The Alien is in good hands. We will take care of it... and return it safely to its place of origin."

The design of the website is reminiscent of a video game, with neon green text to descibe the so called "Aliens". Its design is created to draw attention, leaning on the sci-fi aspect to draw in viewers, and utilising fear to drive human behaviour. Their use of dehumanising language and rhetoric increases the risk of atrocities by imbedding deep fear of the out-group members to American citizens. The site creates a false impression of immigrant populations; using dangerous speech and depictions to paint the populations as nonhuman entities. The language used portrays them as extraterrestrials and refers to them as "it". This website was created to convince the public to treat these populations as nonhuman and to squash any compassion for them.

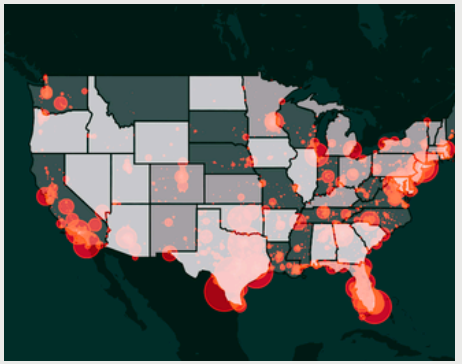
This site also portrays Donald Trump as the "saviour" from the supposed existential threat of an "Alien invasion". He has portrayed himself as the only protection for this; reminiscent of other authoritarians who introduce a threat, then offer themselves as the only saviour.

The White House launched this alien-themed website, "Aliens.gov" following the release of Government files related to alien and extraterrestrial life. The Pentagon released files on U.F.O's on the site "war.gov/UFO" prior to the website's launch; luring in the public with the promise of "alien life", to instead promote their law enforcement propaganda. The domain was registered in March 2026 and was teased as a portal for UFO/ extraterrestrial files.

The website features the monologue "They Walk Among Us" reading,

"For 60 years, the US government has kept a closely guarded secret. Aliens have been walking among us, living in our neighbourhoods, and interacting with us in our daily lives. They've shopped in the same stores, attended the same classes as our children, and lived seemingly normal human existences. With one exception-they do not belong here. Millions arrived under the cover of darkness and embedded themselves directly into our society. Countless presidents, congressmen, and senior officials knew exactly what was happening. Instead of protecting American citizens, they chose to cover it up and even accelerate the invasion. Until one man finally had the courage to tell the truth. Bold. Unapologetic. Unafraid. President Trump was the first to call out the real danger Aliens pose to every American family, every community, and the future of our nation. The truth is no longer out there. It is right here. Right now."

ICE immigration arrests across the US, White House, 2026



CINEMA

Hattie McDaniel as "Mammy" in "Gone With the Wind" (BBC,2019)

Racist stereotypes degrading or dehumanising minority groups is heavily seen across cinema- from the beginnings of cinema to now. Hollywood has always favoured its white actors; with many films portraying the white man as heroes, while other racial groups fall as villains, sidekicks, or simply sex objects. These racial stereotypes have a negative impact on the public's perceptions of specific racial groups. When there isn'tcontact between racial groups, people tend to rely on media stereotypes to formulate their views.

Dehumanisation of Asian populations gained popularity in the media with the imbedding of the "Lotus Blossom" stereotype. Also known as the China doll or geisha girl- this stereotype often depicts Asian women as quiet, docile, hyper feminine, hypersexualised, disposable, characters who are submissive to their male partners. heir white man partner was often portrayed as their "white man saviour". Another stereotype often shown was the "Dragon Lady" character- often a deceitful person who weaponized their sexuality for nefarious purposes. This character represented the female embodiment of the Yellow Peril- the perceived threat Asian immigrants posed to the American way of life.

These stereotypes and the increased representation of Asian women in American cinema was led by the extensive US military presence in Asian countries during the Cold War; from the 1950s to the 1970s. This military presence institutionalised US military prostitution through agreements with Asian governments; with many women being led to prostitution to survive following the disruption of war. Military men were often peer pressured or hazed by the US military to release their hatred of the enemy onto Asian women's bodies.

On screen the Asian characters were established as "exotic others" to be dominated by white men. These early movies also enforced the stereotype of emasculated Asian men; portraying them as an inferior love interest to white men. The Asian women stereotypes were used as a way of differing them from other populations- through their appearance and costume they were shown as being physically different. They were often used as "set dressing" in popular movies. These stereotypes are also pushed through Japanese manga; a material that is popular amongst American audiences.

These stereotypical descriptions of Asian populations have been deeply imbedded in Western society; leaving lasting effects for these populations. These stereotypes cause harm for Asian women's careers, and they are the most likely to experience sexual violence from intimate partners.

Early examples of these stereotypes include "Madama Butterfly" (Puccini,1904), and "Miss Saigon" (Schonberg and Boublil, 1989).

Original poster,for "Madama Butterfly" (Adolfo Hohenstein, 1904)

The play was based on the short story "Madame Butterfly" (Long, 1898), which was in turn inspired by the French novel "Madame Chrysantheme" (Loti, 1887). The opera was written by Giacomo Puccini and first premiered in February 1904. The first act covers prior to and the wedding ceremony of US naval officer "Pinkerton", and his wife "Butterfly". Butterfly (or her real name "Cio-Cio-San") is a 15-year-old Japanese girl who "Pinkerton" is marrying for convenience and intends to leave once he finds an American wife.

The second act cuts to three years later; with Pinkerton leaving after the wedding, and Butterfly still waiting for him to return. The American consul comes to her house with a letter from Pinkerton; breaking the news that he is not coming back to Japan. She reveals that she gave birth shortly after he left to his son and asks the consul to inform him. Pinkerton receives the news and heads to Japan, as Butterfly and her child wait for him to arrive.

In the third act, Pinkerton arrives at the house, with his new American wife. Him and his wife have come to Japan as his wife has agreed to raise his child. As Pinkerton sees the house, he realises he has made a mistake and goes to speak to Butterfly. She agrees to give up her child if Pinkerton comes again to see her; then prays before statues, says her goodbyes to her son, and blindfolds him. She gives him an American flag and goes behind a screen to stab herself. Pinkerton rushes in, but it is too late and Butterfly dies tragically.

This play dehumanises the Asian woman character by reducing her to an object of beauty, stripped of her agency. Pinkerton doesn't view him as an equal partner, but as a submissive woman who exists solely to serve his needs. Throughout the play she is denied her human depth, emotion, and agency. This play also depicts the narrative that America is a safer and better country, and that Butterfly's child is also being saved by the "white man saviour".

Original poster for "Miss Saigon", (Russ Eglin, 1988)

The sung-through musical was written by Claude-Michel Schonberg, and Alain Boublil, and first premiered in September 1989. It was based on "Madame Butterfly" (Puccini, 1904); and the plot is very similar. The story follows a romance between a US marine and a 17-year-old South Vietnamese bargirl. The two meet just before the marine "Chris" is departing Vietnam; at a party with Vietnamese sex workers, where he is bought a room with "Kim" (referred to as the virgin). Chris offers to take her to America with him, as the two grow closer. A "wedding ceremony" is held for them, where Kim's cousin (whom she was betrothed to at 13) arrives to take her home and is frustrated to see her with a white man. The two men confront each other and draw firearms. He then curses them all out and leaves, as Chris promises again to take Kim with him when he leaves.

A time jump takes place, where it is implied that the two have been separated. Kim continues to believe Chris will come back to rescue her, while he wakes from a dream shouting Kim's name; in bed with his new American wife. He reveals the truth to his wife, while Kim reveals she has a child. He goes with his wife to find Kim, where he finds her working as a dancer in a sleazy club. He learns about her son and agrees to take them back to America with his wife. As they arrive to take them away, Kim steps behind a curtain and shoots herself; reminiscent of the end of "Madame Butterfly".

The dehumanisation in this play is displayed in similar ways to "Madame Butterfly"; through the exploitation of the Asian woman, and the portrayal of her character as disposable. The musical portrays these stereotypes through the exploitation of the Vietnamese women in the sex trade, and the marine's depiction as the "saviour" of Kim and her child.

Poster for the re-release of "Gone with the Wind", (Tom Jung & Howard Terpning, 1967)

Dehumanising stereotypes are also seen in the American historical romance film "Gone with the Wind"(Fleming, 1939). It was adapted from the 1936 novel by Margaret Mitchell. The film follows the story of Scarlett O'Hara, the daughter of a plantation owner, and her romance with Ashley Wilkes; who is married to his cousin.

It begins in 1861, on the eve of the American Civil War; where Scarlett attends Ashley's engagement party. She makes an advance on him but is rejected, but develops a romance with another guest, Rhett Butler. News of President Lincoln's call for volunteers to fight in the South interrupts the party, and the Southern men rush to enlist. She marries Ashley's sister's husband, Charles, to make Ashley jealous before he leaves. Charles passes while serving in the Confederate Army and Scarlett's mother sends her to the Hamilton home in Atlanta; where she makes a scene attending a charity bazaar by wearing mourning attire while attending with Rhett. The tide of the war turns and many men in Scarlett's town are killed.

Eight months pass, and Ashley's cousin Melanie gives birth with Scarlett's aid, and Rhett helps them flee before going off the fight. Scarlett returns home but finds that her mother has died of typhoid fever, and her father has lost his mind. Ashley returns, and Scarlett asks him to run away with her, he confesses his desire for her but says he cannot leave Melanie. Scarlett's father is thrown from his horse and killed. Now unable to pay the Reconstructionist taxes imposed, Scarlett appeals to Rhett but is rejected, then asks wealthy store owner Frank to marry her.

Scarlett is attacked while driving through a shanty town alone; and Frank, Ashley and others make a night raid on the town, where Frank is killed. Following Frank's funeral, Rhett proposes to her and she accepts, they have a daughter, but Scarlett still desires Ashley. She refuses to have any more children or share the bed with Rhett and is seen at Frank's mill embracing Ashley. Rhett hears rumours of the embrace and forces Scarlett to attend Ashley's birthday party.

Later that night, they argue about Ashley, Rhett kisses her and states his desire to have sex with her, then carries her to the bedroom against her will. He apologises the next day and offers her a divorce which she rejects.
Time passes and Scarlett informs him she is pregnant, but they argue and she falls down a flight of stairs; subsequently suffers in a miscarriage. They visit Melanie who has had complications with her pregnancy and is on her deathbed. Scarlett consoles Ashley while Rhett prepares to leave. She realises it was Rhett she loved not Ashley, and pleads with him to stay, but he rebuffs and leaves. Distraught, she returns home and vows to one day get Rhett back.

This film has been heavily criticized for its romanticisation of this period, and for reducing the Black characters to satirical stereotypes. It characterised the "Mammy" trope, with Hattie McDaniel's performance. The "mammy" character is portrayed as an asexual, maternal figure who devotes her life to her white employers and prioritises them over her own family.

This narrative reduces her character, and strips her personal desire, family life, or agency. The free Black characters and enslaved men were reduced to two stereotypical extremes; the devoted, docile character (like Uncle Peter), and the childlike, incompetent figure (like Prissy). The characters like Prissy are often only used for comic relief; depicting Black people as ignorant or incapable.

The overarching narrative of the story shows enslaved people as content and loyal, without the same complex inner lives, romantic desires, or aspirations as the white characters.

The horrors of slavery are romanticised in a Southern fantasy. Emancipated Black citizens are portrayed as dangerous agents of societal decay. The novel features the Klu Klux Klan as a protective organisation, justifying the violence against Black Americans topreserve the "social order".

Theatrical poster for "Scarface", (Intralink Film Graphic Design, 1983)

AL PACINO
SCARFACE
In the spring of 1980, the port at Mariel Harbor was opened, and thousands set sail for the United States. They came in search of the American Dream.
One of them found it on the sun-washed avenues of Miami... wealth, power and passion beyond his wildest dreams.
He was Tony Montana. The world will remember him by another name ...SCARFACE.
A MARTIN BREGMAN PRODUCTION
A BRIAN DE PALMA FILM
AL PACINO "SCARFACE"
SCREENPLAY BY OLIVER STONE
MUSIC BY GIORGIO MORODER
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY JOHN A. ALONZO A.S.C.
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER LOUIS A. STROLLER
PRODUCED BY MARTIN BREGMAN
DIRECTED BY BRIAN DE PALMA
He loved the American Dream. With a vengeance.
A UNIVERSAL PICTURE
R RESTRICTED

American crime drama "Scarface" (Palma, 1983) has been widely criticised for its imbedding of stereotypes about Cuban immigrants; specifically, those who immigrated during the 1980 Mariel Boatlift. The film reduces these immigrants to violent, drug-addicted predators. It was directed by Brian De Palma and written by Oliver Stone; being based on the novel by Armitage Trail, and the 1932 film by Howard Hawks.

Set in 1980, it begins with ex-convict Cuban refugee Tony Montana as he arrives in Miami as part of the Mariel boatlift, with his friend Manny and other companions. Green cards are arranged for them by drug lord Frank in exchange for murdering a former henchman of Fidel Castro. Tony and Manny work as dishwashers but grow dissatisfied and meet with Frank's right-hand man Omar, who sends them to purchase cocaine. Tony and Angel are taken at gunpoint, where Tony is made to watch as Angel is killed. He is rescued, and they kill the dealers and deliver the drugs and money to Frank. They suspect that Omar set them up.

Tony and Manny begin working for Frank; where Tony begins to flirt with Frank's trophy wife, Elvira. Frank sends Tony and Omar to Bolivia to meet drug lord Alejandro. Tony tries to negotiate a large deal without Frank's approval, which angers Omar. Sosa makes Tony watch his men hang Omar, as they tell him Omar is a police informant. Tony states he has never trusted Omar, and Sosa trusts his integrity and accepts the deal.

When he arrives back, Frank is furious at him for the unauthorised deal. Tony severs his business ties with Frank and sets up his own cocaine operation. A detective on Frank's payroll Bernstein attempts to extort Tony for police protection, and Tony is attacked by hitmen at the club. He escapes with minor wounds and confrontsFrank and Bernstein about the attack. Tony makes Manny kill Frank, then kills Bernstein. He takes control of Frank's drug operation, marries Elvira and becomes the distributor of Sosa's cocaine.

In 1983, Tony is charged with tax evasion and is facing prison time from a sting operation by federal agents. Sosa offers to keep him out of prison if he kills a journalist who wants to expose Sosa. At a restaurant, a drunken Tony criticizes Manny and Elvira, leading Elvira to call him out and leave him. Sosa's henchmen put a bomb under the journalist's car, but Tony tries to cancel the hit as the journalist is with his wife and children. Sosa's henchmen refuse and Tony kills him before the bomb detonates. Sosa is furious, and vows revenge.

Tony tracks down his sister and finds her with Manny. He kills Manny before learning they had just married. He takes his sister to his estate and begins a cocaine binge. His sister shoots and wounds him and is then killed by one of Sosa's men. His men invade the grounds and kill Tony's guards, as Tony taunts and kills many of the invaders. He is shot in the back, and his body falls into the pool.

This film depicts the Cuban immigrants of the Mariel boatlift as dangerous and aggressive criminals; when only a small percentage of the 125,000 refugees had criminal records; with the vast being law-abiding citizens seeking to escape the oppression they faced. Scarface played into the political anxieties of this era. The film frequently links the Cuban character's identities to aggression, sexual deviance, and addiction.
Their depiction of the Cuban immigrants was lazy representation; drawing heavily on Italian American mafia tropes rather than Cuban culture. The Cuban characters use broken English and inaccurate accents. It reinforced negative stereotypes that overshadow the cultural and economic contributions of the Latino community.

Kara Tepe refugee camp on Lesbos, Greece, (Edelstein, 2015)

Molyvos on the Greek Island of Lesbos, (Edelstein, 2015)

News outlets often employ recurring techniques to dehumanise targeted groups; whether it's obvious to viewers or not. Techniques such as metaphorical framing, passive phrasing, delegitimising language, visual dehumanisation, and the omission of necessary context. Metaphorical framing includes using dehumanising metaphors to describe immigrant populations, such as describing them as a "flood", "swarm", or "disease";framing them as uncontrollable natural disasters or a threat to hygiene or security.

Passive phrasing is used to describe the atrocities taken place, rather than active phrasing to obscure accountability for the actions and paint the civilian harm as "collateral damage". Language such as "lives were lost" is used rather than language that portrays the atrocities as an attack. Delegitimising language is used to cast doubt on the out-group's credibility.

The omission of necessary context is used to present the atrocities without the underlying historical or political context to these events. Visual dehumanisation is often used in photos accompanying news articles to display immigrant populations as anonymous, faceless masses rather than individuals.

Many photos taken by photojournalists show immigrants without any expression, portraying them as being distant and less human. This is done as an elaborate attempt to block any relationship between the subject and the viewer. Photos of immigrant populations are often taken with them as a group; making the reader view them as a collective group rather than individual people.

People's perception of these issues is "deeply shaped by the media's lexical and visual choices" (Gilliam et al, 2002).

The use of these techniques creates a sociopolitical environment that justifies harsh border control measures and deters any empathy for the out-groups.

This language can influence public perception and opinions on these issues, often leading to the public accepting or justifying harsh atrocities. The use of these stereotypes and dehumanising descriptions impacts not only how the public views these immigrant populations, but also how these populations and incarcerated individuals view themselves.

This dehumanisation is felt by immigrant populations; making them feel differed from society, more emotionally hostile, more likely to support violent collective action and less likely to cooperate with law enforcement.

Findings from research into the ways immigrant populations are portrayed in the news reveals a dominant narrative framed by a semantic preference for government, law, and order is often used.

The use of language such as "illegal" and "deportation" carry a negative narrative that constructs immigrants as a threat. Immigration has been an ongoing debate between political leaders, the public sector, and within the mass public- with this debate drawing wide media coverage within contemporary media.

Immigrants waiting to cross the US-Mexico border, (2022)

(Filmman64, Shutterstock, 2018)

POP CULTURE

Pop culture consists of many deeply ingrained caricatures that are used to depict minority groups. In modern societal cultures, these stereotypes are seen in Internet memes which are known as "individual bits of cultural information... that are widely shared electronically" (Murphy & Okdie, 2013). The rhetoric in memes has a big influence on our societal perceptions and norms; as humour is "one of the most pervasive elements of public culture" (Pickering & Lockyer, 2005), and memes specifically have risen in popularity, becoming a "dominant mode of online communication" (Shifman, 2014). They are intended to be humorous social commentaries, but many can be incredibly racist in nature. This humour is derived from historical stereotypes and norms, with a study showing that most Internet memes that mock people of colour reflect the "historical racism perpetuated in our everyday lives" (Yoon, 2016).
Internet based racist jokes are representative of "the expression of a form of repressed racism that, in other situations, is the subject of social disapprobation" (Weaver, 2010). Internet memes had an influential role in the imbedding of alt-right messaging during the 2016 US presidential elections; with media outlets further amplifying and spreading Trump's political message and that of white supremacy. This election saw a significant surge in radicalised online content, and extreme white nationalist ideologies. This kind of media often targets a specific group, attracting "young, white men who felt marginalised by feminism and political correctedness" (TBS report, 2023).

Screen clip of Papillon Soo in "Full Metal Jacket" (Kubrick, 1987), (Tenor, 2017)

The above clip from "Full Metal Jacket" has been referenced and quoted since its release; being used against Asian and Asian American women and further ingraining the stereotype of Asian women as prostitutes into societal culture. The quotes "Me so horny" and "Me love you long time" have been referenced in cinema, meme culture, songs, and throughout society. Referenced in movies such as "The 40-Year-Old Virgin" (Apatow, 2005), and TV shows such as "The Office" (Daniels, 2005) and "Pen15" (Zvibleman, 2019).

It has been featured by artists Nelly Furtado with "Maneater" (Furtado, 2006), Mariah Carey with "I'll Be Lovin' You Long Time" (Carey, 2008), and Fergie in "London Bridge" (Fergie, 2006). It has been used to normalise and popularise casual racism toward Asian and Asian American women; reducing them to a sexual degrading label. The popularisation of this clip has caused years of dehumanising and traumatic experiences for Asian and Asian American women.

Many of these stereotypes are aimed at African American populations; with many depicting them as individuals capable of committing larceny and other crimes. One popular meme topic shows individuals from minority groups with food stereotypically associated with their culture, with many being Black people with fried chicken or watermelon. In the media and sporting events, Black people are often portrayed as "animals, especially apes or monkeys" (Jardina & Piston, 2021), dehumanising them in an animalistic manner reminiscent of the narrative portrayed in Slavery in America. In media such as the theatre, racialised associations of stupidity and irrationality with Black characters have been made imbedded with their stereotyped representation of Black characters and other Blackface comedy.

During and following the Covid-19 pandemic, there was a tendency seen by the public to refer to the pandemic as “Chinese flu” or “Kung flu”; resulting in the public “assigning blame to China and its people” (TBS report, 2023).

Stereotypes of these populations having “unhygienic” or “immoral” eating habits increased; using a stereotyped, false narrative which degraded Asian populations.

Propaganda and societal humour during World War 2 stripped emotional depth and dignity from Jewish populations; with many jokes implying that the Jewish as a group enjoyed being gassed or had poor hygiene. These stereotypes and rhetoric encouraged the public to accept or support beliefs of Aryan purity.

September 11th attacks, (Clark, 2001)

The terrorist attacks on the 11th September 2001 brought on a rise in racism, xenophobia and Islamophobia globally; in societal and governmental opinion and behaviour.

In the aftermath there were more than 700 documented violent attacks and murders in the US of Muslim and Arabic people; with hate crimes against these populations rising 1617% from 2000 to 2001 (FBI, 2000, 2001).

Even several years following the attacks the number of anti-Muslim hate crimes remained “five times what they were in 2000” (FBI, 2005).

There were “257 hate crimes against Muslims in 2015, and 307 in 2016” (Alfonseca, 2021); showing the stereotypes and racism adopted after the attacks sticks in society.

In the weeks after 9/11, federal authorities arrested and detained 1,200 non-citizens; with almost all of them being from Muslim countries.

These detainees were held for prolonged periods without charges, denied access to attorneys and “subject to aggressive interrogations” (Human Rights Watch, “Abuses Plague”).

Following the attacks, news broadcasts and public discourse often paired hijackers with Muslims or Arabs.

Leading American and other Western countries to project their fear onto anyone resembling the perpetrators.

Heightened security by law enforcement was put in place; security that disproportionately targeted Muslim and Arabic populations. The US government used this attack and the racism it brought to exploit the policies and practices put in place before 9/11 to “mobilise reactionary measures against Arab, South Asian, and Muslim communities” (Arab Narratives, n.d)

HOW THE MEDIA FORMS INTERACT

The varying media forms interact to spread dehumanising narratives by creating a loop of political rhetoric.

Traditional media such as news outlets establish a legitimacy of these caricatures; introducing the stereotypes to pop culture and integrating them in societal opinion and perceptions.

Social media accelerates this media through the engagement-driven algorithms- leading people into echo chambers of often alt-right messaging. Content that provokes fear, anger, or moral outrage spreads faster than other information. People are put into algorithms where their pre-existing biases are constantly affirmed by the media they engage with.

Visual platforms such as the photos included in news articles, and government messaging reduces these targeted groups to anonymous masses through the lexical and visual dehumanisation.

Comedic entertainment and satirical takes on populations play a crucial role in lowering the public’s compassion and empathy for these populations and leading them to accept or encourage the dehumanising narratives.

Racist or xenophobic ideologies are framed as jokes using sarcasm, irony, and satire. This allows the public to feel comfortable mocking or blaming the targeted group.

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